

Application No. 09/517,977
Amendment dated September 15, 2004
Reply to Office Action of April 15, 2004

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Following amendment, thirty-seven (37) total claims and three (3) independent claims (claims 1, 7, and 21) remain in this application. Specifically, Applicants seek to amend the claims 1-34. The claims are being amended to clarify the subject matter of the present invention and to place the present application in better condition for examination. Applicants believe that the present Amendment adds no new subject matter and respectfully request the entering of this Amendment.

OATH/DECLARATION

Section 2 of the Office Action objects to the previously submitted declaration as being defective for failing to specify a mailing address for the Applicants. An address of residence is listed for each of the Applicants, and these addresses of residence should be used as the mailing addresses for the Applicants. The mailing addresses for the inventors corresponding to the applicants' residences are also listed in an accompanying Application Data Sheet.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS UNDER 37 CRF §1.126

Section 4 of the Office Action objected under 37 CRF §1.126 to the proposed renumbering of the claims 8-14 and 22-28, . Accordingly, the claim listing contained in the present Supplemental Amendment reflects the claim numbering, as originally submitted.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 USC §112, SECOND PARAGRAPH

Section 5 of the Office Action rejected claims 24 and 26-27 under 35 USC §112(2) because of improper, self-dependency. Applicants believe that the reverting

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of the claims to the originally submitted numbering, as requested above to comply with 37 CFR §1.126, has addressed this error because the claims 25 and 27 (formerly, 24 and 26) are no longer self-referencing.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 USC §101

Continuing with the Office Action, sections 8 rejected claims 1-37 under 35 USC §101 as lacking technical contents. Applicants have attempted to address this rejection through claim amendments to specifically identify and claim the technical elements of the present invention. While much current ambiguity exists in regards to the appropriate claim content and structure needed to satisfy requirements of 35 USC §101, Applicants have attempted to amend the claims according to advice and assistance received from the USPTO helpline.

Applicants thus respectfully request reconsideration and allowance of independent claims 1, 7, and 21, along with the remaining claims depending therefrom.

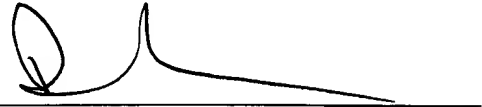
Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner considers the above-noted amendment when the application is examined on its merits and that the Examiner issues a timely allowance of the pending claims. The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representatives to expedite prosecution.

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If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge the fees to our Deposit Account No. 50-1349.

Respectfully submitted,



By: _____
Celine Jimenez Crowson
Registration No. 40,357

Dated: September 15, 2004

HOGAN & HARTSON LLP
555 13th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004
Telephone: 202-637-5600
Facsimile: 202-637-5910
Customer No. 24633

David D. Nelson
Registration No. 47,818